MINUTES

OF THE

CONVENTION OF ELDERS AND DEACONS

OF THE

SYNOD OF NORTH-CAROLINA,

AT FAYETTEVILLE,

March 6th and 7th, 1861.

FAYETTEVILLE, N. C.:
JOB-OFFICE OF THE PRESBYTERIAN,
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THE FLOWERS COLLECTION

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MINUTES.

The Fourth Annual Convention of Elders and Deacons, assembled in the Presbyterian Church at Fayetteville, N. C., on Wednesday evening, March 6th, 1861, at 7 o'clock.

L. B. Krimminger, of Concord Presbytery, was appointed temporary Chairman, and Dr. R. L. Beall of Orange Presbytery, Secretary.

On motion of Wm. Murdock, a Committee of three was appointed by the Chair, to nominate officers for the Convention. This Committee consisted of Messrs. George McNeill, Richardson Faucette, and Wm. Murdock.

The Convention was permanently organized by electing the following officers, who were recommended by the Committee:

Dr. H. C. Robinson, of Fayetteville, President.

Dr. E. Nye Hutchison, of Charlotte, and Dr. D. P. Weir, of Greensboro', Vice-Presidents.

D. McLaurin, of Fayetteville, and Dr. R. L. Beall, of Lexington, Secretaries.

After prayer was offered by Dr. J. H. Dickson, the following Delegates were reported as present:

MEMBERS FROM ORANGE PRESBYTERY.

Dr. D. P. Weir, Elder—W. A. Caldwell, C. G. Yates, Deacons, Greensboro'; Richardson Faucette, Elder, Haywood; Dr. R. L. Beall, Elder, Lexington; J. A. Womack, Elder, Pittsboro'; M. Shaw, Elder, High Point.

FROM CONCORD PRESBYTERY.

Wm. Murdoch, Elder—J. D. Brown, Deacon, Salisbury; Dr. E. Nye Hutchison, Maj. D. H. Hill, Elders, Charlotte; R. H. Morrison, Sandy McKinley, Elders, Rocky River; L. B. Krimminger, Deacon, Poplar Tent; S. W. Caldwell, Elder, Mallard Creek.

FROM FAYETTEVILLE PRESBYTERY.

Geo. McNeill, Hon. J. G. Shepherd, Jas. Martine, E. W. Barge, D. McLaurin, Elders—Wm. B. Wright, W. McL. McKay, C. A. McMillan, Dr. H. C. Robinson, G. W. Williams, Deacons, Fayetteville; D. Shaw, Elder—Neil Ray, Deacon, Galatia; John McDonald, Elder—W.

J. Smith, David Murphy, Deacons, Rockfish ; A. A. McKethan, Elder —Robt. Smith, Deacon, Cyprus ; Dr. James H. Dickson, B. G. Worth, James C. Smith, J. N. Andrews, Elders—M. McInnis, Deacon, First Church, Wilmington ; Alex. Sprunt, Elder—J. R. Latta, Deacon, Second Church, Wilmington ; John Elliott, Elder, China Grove ; Joel Williams, Elder, Bluff Church ; A. McD. Martin, Deacon, Mt. Carmel ; Wm. Shaw, Elder, Long Street ; John M. Graham, Deacon, Sandy Grove ; Neill A. Currie, Elder, Laurinburg ; Angus S. Brown, Elder, Lebanon ; Arch'd. McLeod, Elder, Sandy Grove ; Wm. McDougald, Elder, Barbacue ; R. N. Buie, Elder, Buffalo ; N. R. Bryan, A. M. Wicker, Deacons, Buffalo ; Milton McIntosh, Elder—J. McLean, Deacon, Laurel Hill ; W. J. Stewart, Deacon—James A. Smith, Elder, Antioch ; A. R. Wadsworth, Euphronia ; Dan'l. McKinnon, Elder, Centre ; A. R. McDonald, Elder, Carthage ; E. F. Shaw, Jno. M. N. Ferguson, Neil R. McDonald, Deacons—J. B. Black, Dan'l McDonald, Elders, Union ; W. L. McDiarmid, Elder, Bethel ; A. Malloy, Elder, Lumber Bridge ; W. N. Whitted, Elder, Beth-Car ; Jas. P. Hodges, Elder, Sardis ; John W. Hodges, Elder, Oakland ; Patrick Murphy, Elder, Oak Plain ; John McKinnon, Elder, St. Pauls ; J. L. Campbell, Elder, Sandy Grove ; John McLauchlin, Elder, Bethel ; Robert Williams, Deacon, Bluff ; John B. Graham, Elder, Bethesda ; Duncan Murchison, Elder, China Grove.

On motion, all Ministers of the Gospel, who were present were invited to sit as corresponding members. The following Clergymen took their seats as members :

Rev. John Wheeler, D. D., Rev. J. C. Sinclair, Rev. J. P. McPherson, Rev. F. K. Nash, Rev. D. B. Black, Rev. D. D. McBryde, Rev. George McNeill, Rev. John M. Sherwood, Rev. H. A. Munroe, Rev. N. McDonald, and Rev. D. Fairley.

On motion, the President appointed the following Committee to prepare business for the Convention :

Dr. J. H. Dickson of Wilmington, Wm. Murdock, Salisbury ; Geo. McNeill, Fayetteville ; J. A. Womack, Pittsboro'; Richardson Faucette, Haywood ; John D. Brown, Salisbury.

Maj. Hill delivered a very original and interesting address. Subject the Bible as a book of science.

On motion, *Resolved*, That the thanks of this Convention be tendered to Maj. D. H. Hill for his admirable address, delivered on this occasion, and that he be requested to furnish a copy for publication.

On motion, the Convention adjourned, to meet at 9 1 2 o'clock, A. M., and devote one hour to devotional exercises.

The Convention was adjourned by benediction pronounced by Rev. F. K. Nash.

THURSDAY MORNING—9½ O'CLOCK.

Convention met according to adjournment, and spent one hour in devotional exercises.

Appropriate passages of Scripture were read by the President, and prayer offered by Messrs. J. N. Andrews, Alexander Sprunt, W. A. Caldwell, and James Martine.

The Business Committee, through their Chairman, Dr. J. H. Dickson submitted a portion of their report for the consideration of the Convention, which created discussion, in which the following members engaged: Dr. Hutchison, W. A. Caldwell, J. N. Andrews, Maj. Hill, Dr. Dickson, and C. G. Yates.

A delegate from each of the Churches was called on by the President to report how far the recommendations of the Salisbury Convention had been complied with in their respective congregations.

These reports showed that in many congregations zeal and activity were manifested by Church officers, and the spiritual condition of the churches seemed to be in the advance, while in others it was evident that too little interest was manifested, and religion in too languishing a state—Sabbath Schools too much neglected, and the colored population not sufficiently cared for.

Convention took a recess to meet at 3 1-2 o'clock, P. M.

AFTERNOON SESSION.

The President took the Chair, and called the Convention to order.

The Chairman of the Business Committee substituted their report in full.

On motion, the report was received for consideration. Hon. J. G. Shepherd addressed the Convention somewhat at length, and suggested certain amendments, which were adopted. Further remarks were made by Dr. Hutchison, James Martine and others, after which, on motion, the report was read *seriatim*, and unanimously adopted, and is as follows:

REPORT:

The Committee appointed by the Convention of Elders and Deacons, to prepare business for the consideration of the meeting, beg leave to report that they have had the same under consideration and that they consider the subjects embraced in the report of the committee appointed by the meeting in Salisbury, in December 1859, as still affording proper topics for discussion and action by this meeting.

These topics constitute a digest of nearly all the subjects embraced in the general subject of church extension. They certainly have not

been exhausted by discussion, and the committee apprehend that they have not been carried out as fully or as generally as they could desire.

With a view, however, to ascertain the extent to which the recommendations of the meeting at Salisbury have been carried out, the convention is requested to call upon the office-bearers of each of the churches to report whether any and what progress has been made in their respective churches in carrying into practical effect these important recommendations.

Your committee cannot refrain from the expression of their deep regret, that as far as they have been able to ascertain, there is still a deplorable scarcity of ministers in some of the Presbyteries of our Synod, and in considering the probable causes of this truly melancholy destitution, your committee are very apprehensive, that the chief source of the evil is to be found in the inadequate support of the ministry; and in this connection they would take occasion to press upon the attention of this body and of every individual member of it the importance of cultivating the christian grace of giving, and of giving with a liberal hand of that worldly substance of which we have been made trustees by the providence of God. We would, however, earnestly urge all those who contribute to religious objects to regard their donations as debts to Him, whose we are and to whom we belong, and not as acts of benevolence to call forth self-laudation and self glorification.

With regard to the employment of evangelists the committee are happy to have it in their power to report that this recommendation of the preceding meetings of this body has to some extent been carried into operation and that much good it is hoped has been the result of its adoption. They regret to have to add, that the laborers in this part of God's vineyard are still deplorably out of proportion to the great extent of the harvest, and regarding as they do this plan, as admirably adapted to the wants and circumstances of our Synod, they would urgently recommend to the Presbyteries the adoption and extension of the system.

It is suggested that our Evangelists may be greatly aided in their labor by the help of pastors and stated supplies throughout the State; and with the kindest and most respectful deference to brethren who may think differently, we declare it as our opinion, that the pastoral relation is in many cases too exclusive. In the early times of our church in this country, it was not unusual to send a pastor from his own charge to preach wherever there were waste places to be supplied, and this was sometimes imposed upon them as an obligation which none felt at liberty to disregard. We do not recommend now any Presbyterial action upon this question; but we appeal to all who have been set apart to the work of the ministry not to give themselves entirely to the service of any one church, community or people. When a pastor leaves his pulpit on this duty, or any other duty or cause, we hold that the doors of the church should not be closed, but religious services ought to be conducted by the Elders and deacons in such manner as may be most to edification. In many of our churches this duty of our brethren has been sadly slighted, and it becomes us now to resolve that a step forward must be taken in this direction. We recognize the obligation upon us to contrbute in this way to the missionary cause. We must not

only be willing to part for the time with our pastors—we must encourage them to go forward in this work—and while away, we must attend to the services of the church, to the prayer-meetings, and also to visitations among our members, which last duty we recommend and urge upon the brethren as one of the surest means of binding together, helping and edifying all the flock. This labor of our pastors out of their own charges will as we believe, be doubly blessed : to those who preach and those to whom they preach, while in the Elders and Deacons to whom the care of the church is given for the time, a more lively faith will be developed, a "faith that works by love and that purifies the heart."

We go further in this view and declare it as our opinion, that apart from the good which may come to the church and the world around us by means of missions, the occasional detaching of a pastor from his people will be useful to them in causing them to look up to God for help and blessings, and in teaching them, whether Elders, Deacons, or private members, to feel that their pastor, however eminent, learned, active pious, is but a man—not the source of light and wisdom—not their trust, their dependence, "but one whose breath is in his nostrils." We should thus learn, while we "lean not to our own understanding," to do for ourselves, for our church and its Great Head, what we seem now to impose too much upon our preachers.

The next topic to which your committee desire to refer is the duty of Pastors and Elders in regard to the religious instruction of the colored population; and here while they have reason to believe that this duty has not been altogether neglected, they at the same time apprehend that it has not been as faithfully carried out as is desirable. On this head, while your committee would recommend a faithful observance of their duty as christians, to our colored population, they would at the same time advise that in so doing they be careful to keep strictly within the letter of the law of the State, and to recollect that our duty as citizens is by no means incompatible with our duty as christians.

Your committee take great pleasure in being able to report to your body that there has been a very marked improvement in the attendance of Elders of the church at the Synodical and Presbyterial meetings of the churches, and are entirely satisfied that this improvement has arisen from the zeal and energy which has been imparted to the church by the meetings hitherto held by this body.

Upon the subject of congregational visiting by the Elders of the church, your committee are fearful that this recommendation of former meetings has not been reduced to practice to any considerable extent, and they can therefore only renew on this point the recommendation of the preceding meetings of this body, and urge upon the Eldership the systematic performance of this important duty and the distribution of it among themselves so that each individual elder of a church may be enabled to aid and uphold his pastor, as a spiritual co-laborer in the important work of feeding the flock committed to their supervision.

Your committee have reason to fear that the importance of the office of Deacon in the proper economy of the church is in not a few instances overlooked by some of our churches; and while these officers having properly in charge all the temporalities of the church, are apt to regard their duty to the church as fully discharged when they have provided for

the support of the minister, it is apprehended that they in some instances overlook the important fact that they are the special guardians of the poor of the congregation, and that their supervision of the same and the proper supply of their necessities is not the least important of their duties.

Upon the subject of parental authority and family discipline, the committee have reason to fear that there has been a great departure from the strict line of christian duty. They would therefore respectfully urge upon the Elders and Deacons of the church the necessity of a conscientious discharge of this important duty on their part, that thus they may be enabled to give a salutary example to those who are without.

While it is obviously the duty of the churches to make provision for the support of aged and disabled servants of God, and while the committee cannot bring themselves to believe that this plain dictate of christian duty is ever knowingly neglected, they still think that the recommendation of preceding meetings of this body upon this subject is well worthy of consideration. They are unable to report, whether any attempt has been made to carry this recommendation of the convention into practical effect except in the Presbytery of Fayetteville, where it has been carried into operation.

As regards family worship, while the committee have no means of ascertaining to what extent this essential duty and christian privilege is practised or neglected, they cannot forego the opportunity of urging upon the members of this body and their constituents, the indispensible necessity of a strict observance of this duty as a highly important if not essential means of growth in grace.

Your committee would reiterate in the most decided manner the recommendation of the Salisbury convention, in favor of universal and persever ing efforts on the part of Elders and Deacons to establish, sustain and multiply Sabbath Schools in all the churches and most heartily advise them not to be deterred from the prosecution of so good a work and so important a means of building up our Zion as these noble institutions afford by any difficulties of any kind or degree.

The committee in conclusion would recommend all the remaining topics in the report of the Salisbury convention to the favorable consideration of this body, believing that they are all likely to be of essential benefit in promoting the spread of the gospel throughout our land.

Rev. Dr. Wheeler of Vermont addressed the Convention in a very interesting and instructive manner, adducing several practical suggestions, one of which related to the employment of Theological Students as Evangelists during their vacation.

The Convention took a recess until 7 1-2 o'clock.

EVENING SESSION.

Convention called to order by the President.

On motion of Wm. Murdock,

Resolved, That the next Convention be held at Newbern, at such time

as shall be designated by a Committee of three, to be appointed by the President.

This Committee consists of Drs. J. H. Dickson, D. P. Weir, and Mr. Wm. Murdock.

Dr. Dickson being called on, delivered his address. Subject, The Influence of Christianity upon the progress of Civilization at large, and upon its professors individually.

The following resolution was offered by A. R. McDonald, Esq., and unanimously adopted:

Resolved, That the thanks of this Convention be tendered to Dr. J. H. Dickson for his able and interesting address, and that he be requested to furnish a copy of the same for publication.

The following preamble and resolutions, relative to the death of R. W. Gibbs, were offered by Dr. Hutchison, and unanimously adopted:

Whereas, it has pleased an all-wise Providence to remove one who was identified with the first Convention of Elders and Deacons, one who under all circumstances, and in all places endeavored to meet the solemn obligations of his office—who adorned his profession by a conversation and conduct becoming the disciple of Jesus. Therefore,

Resolved, 1. That in the death of Robert W. Gibbs, Elder in the 1st Congregation of Wilmington, the poor have lost a real friend, the Eldership a member who constantly sought the path of duty and boldly walked therein. Ever ready to sacrifice time, money and personal comfort to advance the cause of truth—considering it better to serve in the temple of God, than rule in the tents of wickedness.

Resolved, 2. That in his frequent attendance on the assemblies of the Church—his readiness to adopt and further every enterprise which looked to the edification of Christ's kingdom—to comfort the sorrowing, and relieve the unfortunate, he placed before the Elders and Deacons of the Synod of North-Carolina, an example worthy of all imitation.

Resolved, 3. That this Convention sincerly sympathize with the relatives of our late brother, and that a copy of this preamble and these resolutions be transmitted to the friends of the deceased.

After some remarks the following recommendation was submitted by Mr. W. A. Caldwell, and unanimously adopted:

Deeming it important that all our Congregations be supplied with a sound religious literature, we earnestly recommend to all the Elders and Deacons in our Synod to take early steps to secure a supply of the tracts and books of the Board of Publication, and that they proceed to distribute the same, and endeavor to enlist the services of as many lay members, male and female, as can be prevailed upon to join in the work, and that we all endeavor to feel more than hitherto that there is work for each and every one to do, who is a member of the Presbyterian church.

On motion, unanimously resolved, that 1200 copies of the minutes, including the addresses of Dr. J. H. Dickson and Maj. D. H. Hill, be published.

VOTE OF THANKS.

Unanimously resolved, that the thanks of the Convention be tendered to the citizens of Fayetteville for their generous christian hospitality, and to the Steamboats and different Railroad Companies which have liberally granted return tickets.

On motion, resolved, that the thanks of this Convention are due to the President and officers for the able and efficient manner in which they have discharged their duties.

On motion, the Convention adjourned to meet at Newbern, at the time deemed advisable by the Committee.

Adjourned with the Apostolic Benediction.

H. C. ROBINSON, *Prest.*

Dr. E. NYE HUTCHISON, } *Vice-Prest.'s.*
" D. P. WEIR, }

D. McLAURIN, } *Secretaries.*
R. L. BEALL, }

APPENDIX.

Dr. Dickson's Address.

Brethren and Office-bearers of the Church of Christ:

Appearing before you at the request of some of your number, I have concluded to offer you a few reflections on the influence of Christianity on the progress of Society at large, and on that portion of its members who having embraced its faith and its doctrines, endeavor to conform their lives to its requirements.

It is, as you are aware, a most comprehensive subject, a truly grand theme, the adequate treatment of which would call for much more extensive and minute historical and statistical knowledge than I can pretend to lay claim to, and would require a much larger space than can be afforded for it in the limits of an address.

Disclaiming therefore, any thing like the presumptuous attempt at an exhaustive treatment of the subject, I can only offer to you a few desultory thoughts upon the general topic, such as I have been able to throw together in the scattered fragments of leisure, which I have been able to secure from the pressing engagements of professional duty.

The primary causes of civilization have generally been classed, by those who have treated the subject systematically, under three heads, namely the Physical, the Intellectual and the Moral causes.

The first, or physical, has reference to the influence of objective nature on man, either through the medium of his wants and necessities, or of his imagination. It includes the influence of soil and climate on the progress of civilization.

That a fertile soil and a mild, salubrious climate, are greatly conducive to the progress of man and of society in civilization and refinement, is a proposition which can hardly fail to meet with an universal assent. There may indeed be some difference of opinion, as to which of these agencies the most potent influence is to be ascribed. Some may contend, and with a good show of reason, sustained too by experience, that a temperate and salubrious climate with a less fertile soil, may more

rapidly promote the progress of nations, than a very fertile soil, and a warm and enervating climate.

Indeed an extremely fertile soil and a tropical climate, may be regarded as opposing obstacles apparently as formidable to progress, as the deserts of Africa or Arabia; or the extreme and inhospitable cold of the Arctic and Antarctic zones. There are for example, districts of country in India and South America under the equator, in which vegetation is so rank and luxuriant as to bid defiance to the efforts of man to subdue it, and from this cause the jungles of India and the forests of Brazil will probably never be brought under cultivation, or be made subservient to the wants of man.

It is usual for those who have undertaken the treatment of the subject systematically, to regard the primitive condition of man, as an uncivilized or savage condition, from which he has emerged with more or less rapidity, according as he has been surrounded with more or less favorable conditions or circumstances. That while some races of men, either in consequence of their having originally been gifted with higher intellectual endowments, or being more highly favored by soil and climate, have made rapid progress in the march of civilization and reached their culmination speedily. Others owing to the pressure of adverse physical influences, have been all the while drawing their slow length along with scarcely any perceptible progress since the dawn of the historical era.

Others regard this view of the primitive condition of our race as altogether hypothetical and mythical and as deriving no support from the dim light of tradition or that of more reliable history. They contend that man as he came forth from the hand of his Creator, was no rude and untutored savage, but an intelligent and civilized being, with all the high and noble attributes of his nature in as great a degree of perfection, as they have ever since attained, and that he has fallen off from his high original level, just in the ratio of his departure from the path of moral rectitude, and his disregard of the great principles of morality originally implanted in his heart and afterwards enforced by all the sanctions of legal enactment.

But whichever view we take of the primitive condition of our race, we must still admit the powerful influence of physical nature, in promoting or retarding its progress in improvement. This is but admitting that as a physical and intellectual being, man stands in relation to a physical universe and an intelligent first cause of objective nature.

He cannot open his eyes on the scene which is spread before him, without seeing on all sides the evidence of an ever present divinity. "The earth does not more clearly feed the body than it does the mind or stimulates it to thought."

But this influence of external nature on man is so universal a condition of human existence, that we cannot fairly ascribe much effect to any slight differences which different regions of the earth present.

If earthquakes and volcanoes do not occur everywhere, there is hardly any region which is not visited by storm and tempest. If the tropical zone has its tornado, the arctic has its hail storm and its snow-storm, and its regions of thick-ribbed ice present scenes of magnificent and terrific grandeur, which are quite as well calculated to awe and subdue the soul, as the terrible exhibition of irresistible power which the careering hurricane exhibits.

If one portion of our earth exhibits the sublime and beautiful conjoined in its mountain scenery, presenting every variety of landscape from the beauty and loveliness of some secluded picturesque nook, to the stern grandeur of the frowning precipice, or the terrific magnificence of the cloud piercing pinnacle; another portion has its solemn forests, its grand cataracts, its deep, dark caverns, whilst another has its broad prairie, its groves, its lakes, its rivers, and the far resounding sea.

No matter on what part of the broad circumference of our globe the observer may station himself, he will have about him objects and scenes which must necessarily impress both his senses and his intellect, and he cannot do less than unite with the Psalmist, when he exclaims, "The heavens declare thy glory and the firmament showeth thy handy work. Day unto day uttereth speech and night unto night showeth knowledge of thee. Their language has gone out unto all the earth," and there are none so rude and ignorant and blind as not to be able to perceive the power and goodness of God, in the regular succession of day and night, of summer and winter, of seed-time and harvest.

But this influence is so wide-spread and universal, that we cannot regard it as particularly operative or efficient on any separate tribe or nation. It was as potent in the old days when the Chaldean shepherds watched their flocks upon the plains of Mesopotamia, and gazed in rapt wonder and admiration upon the glorious constellations of heaven; it was as potent when the evening breeze fanned the locks of the old patriarch Abraham in his tent as it is at this very hour.

Geographical location, fertility of soil and salubrity of climate, may be regarded as the chief physical causes, which exercise an obvious influence on the progress of the race. But these advantages are so equally diffused in the temperate regions of the earth, or the disadvantages of one region are so counterbalanced by advantages, that they nearly neutralise each other, and leave at last, the advancement of society chiefly to the operation of the more potent influences of intellectual and moral causes.

These great agencies in promoting the advancement of society have been in operation (so far as we have been able to determine by the light of history and of tradition) with more or less active energy in all ages. Man however exhibited an early proclivity to moral degradation, even while society was apparently advancing in intellectual improvement.

At the very dawn of the historical era, we find the Egyptians a cultivated and intellectual people, but we find them at the same time worshipers of idol-gods, bowing down to Ammon, Osiris and Isis, and even converting into objects of religious worship, birds and beasts, and creeping things, enshrining in their truly catholic pantheon, the crocodile and the Ibis, the leek, and the onion, professing a pantheism quite comprehensive enough, one would suppose, to excite the admiration of Spinoza himself and to call forth the eulogistic notice of the least enthusiastic of his modern French or German disciples.

In Greece too, we find notwithstanding the wonderful intellectual and aesthetical progress, which she had made at an early day, that a system of false religion had soon sprung up, and that a highly imaginative but grossly material mythology had so engrafted itself upon her literature, as ultimately to have become thoroughly incorporated with it.

In merely external magnificence and material and intellectual civilization we have reason to believe that Thebes and Babylon and Persepolis and Athens and Rome and Byzantium, have scarcely been exceeded by any of the cities of modern times. In gorgeous display and costly luxury, the feast of a Belshazzar or of a Lucullus could hardly be surpassed at the present time, even with the aid of the treasures of Australia and California and a triumph of a Roman proconsul would almost vie with the "pride, pomp and circumstance" of a military review in the Champ de Mars or of a parade at Challons.

The want of some powerful agent for the reformation of morals and of manners was felt and acknowledged by the leading minds of antiquity, even in the palmiest days of Grecian refinement.

At a time when Athens was far in advance of surrounding nations in arts and literature, in government and arms; when her architecture had reached a point which has never been surpassed, when her great orator "fulmined over Greece and shook the fierce democracy" with his marvellous eloquence, when her poets delighted and charmed the most fastidiously critical audiences which had ever been congregated, with those beautiful creations of fancy which have taken captive the educated minds of all succeeding ages; when her philosophers reasoned on the great problems of existence with acuteness and strove to ascertain the true relation which man holds to that great Being, whose existence as a first cause they clearly perceived notwithstanding the clouds

and mists of a pantheistic mythology, which may have concealed this great truth from the minds of the masses, even then was this great and urgent want of the heart and the intellect of man felt and acknowledged.

If natural theology could ever have done more than to reveal to man the existence and benevolence of God, here were the conditions and circumstances which we might well regard as most favorable to its efficient and salutary action on the hearts and the minds of men.

But what is the uniform concurrent testimony of these philosophers themselves, who must be regarded as competent witnesses on this point, but an acknowledgemeut of the scriptural truth that "man by wisdom knows not God."

It is very probable, nay we may admit it to be true that natural theology and unassisted reason may greatly enlighten the understanding and enlarge the intellectual comprehension of the universe; that it may lead to a knowledge of the existence and of the goodness of God; that it might even attain to the idea of a possible future existence and yet it fails notwithstanding to explain to us our true relation to the great creator and ruler of the universe, and gives us no satisfactory reply to the question, how shall we attain to happiness in a future life?

The great Athenian philosopher, Socrates, is said to have been so deeply impressed with the necessity to man of a revelation from Heaven that he regarded it as "a hopeless case if God in his providence do not send some further instructions," thus almost anticipating that great event of our world's history, the advent of the Messiah. But Socrates and his great disciple were exceptions which stand out in marked and singular contrast to the immense mass of surrounding heathenism. Socrates and Plato had attained a much higher point of view than most of even their educated cotemporaries, and if they decide that the light of human reason is an inadequate guide for man in his search after the *to kalon*, the good, the beautiful, and the true, who is competent to reverse their verdict; and we may well imagine how it would have irradiated the countenance of the grand old man of Athens, if the light of the gospel had shone on his path, if his ears could have heard from an authentic source the glorious announcement, "I am the light of the world; he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness but shall have the light of life."

But if the gifted minds of antiquity failed most signally in arriving at a knowledge of the great moral truths which are indispensable to the proper conduct of life, it may be alleged that the world has grown wiser as well as older, and that the progress of knowledge and science, if it has not yet led us to satisfactory conclusions upon the great ques-

tion of man's destiny, holds out the hope of ultimately solving the perplexing problem.

But what has modern philosophy to boast of on this subject, when except among those whose minds have been imbued with the knowledge of the gospel, the result of all their vain attempts is a panetheism as gross and material as the reptile-worship of ancient Egypt. We can hardly afford to treat with contempt the learned "old Thebans" when we shall have scanned what passes under the name of philosophy at the present day in the writings of Fichte or of August Comte.

This latter bold and dogmatic writer who, by his enlarged generalizations and his familiar acquaintance with all the results of scientific research, has probably exercised no small influence in the province of speculative thought in our day, has announced a new instauration, under the title of the Positive Philosophy.

In this system, he announces it as a law of progress of the human mind "that it must pass historically and individually through three stages of development, viz; the theological, the metaphysical, and the positive. In the theological stage of progress all the phenomena of nature are imputed to the active agency of the Gods. In the metaphysical, the Gods are made to give place to certain abstract entities called nature, harmony, number &c. In the positive, or scientific, it is discerned that man can know nothing of causes and is only able to refer phenomena to their general laws of existence or succession."

According to the views of this learned but erratic writer, the theological stage of human thought is that which exists in the infancy of nations, when their minds have been but little enlightened, when the imagination exercises more sway than the reason and the superstitious fears and fancies of men lead them to people cave, grove and fountain with divinities, to ascribe all the destructive agencies and adverse influencies of physical nature to the wrath of some offended deity, and when with a view to propitiate this wrath, they resort to expedients either puerile and contemptible or horrible and revolting, in the shape of peace offerings or sacrifices, going in some instances to the extreme extent of offering even human sacrifices to the fierce Molochs of their faith.

As the race advances in intelligence, the theological phasis of society undergoes a metamorphosis, and it assumes the metaphysical form, which our philosopher regards as a higher and wider stage of knowledge, in which however it is difficult for ordinary minds to discover any progress at all, or only a verbal one.

Indeed that seems to be a narrow and distorted view of the intellectual progress of man which describes the theological stage, as merging

through the metaphysical into the positive or scientific. It assuredly does not seem to be borne out by observation, for while it is true that one form of religious belief may give place to another in the progress of a nation or people, no nation or tribe of men on our globe have exhibited that degree of so-called advancement, in which they have gone entirely beyond any religious belief. That marvellous stage of advancement has been restricted to a comparative few philosophical and speculative intellects, who have advanced so far beyond the age, as never to be likely to be overtaken by the slow but sure movements of the cautious logical and reflective class of men.

The assertion cannot be made with truth even of the French nation, who may be said to have made the nearest approximation to this "bad eminence," for though her revolutionary convention in their mad and senseless folly decreed that there was no God for France, it would be an unpardonable calumny on the nation to charge them with the ratification of this astounding and unparalel legislative edict, this horrible blasphemy of a set of wretches who were drunk with blood and carnage. And it would be equally illogical to conclude that many of her people have made such marvellous advances in profound philosophy, as to be able to see with M. Comte and his esoteric disciples, no God in the universe beyond certain self acting and all regulating laws of nature; beyond which his vaunted positive philosophy, his keen eyed science, can see nothing; laws which have come in some inexplicable way to attain the potent energy which plain unsophisticated reason, has been accustomed to ascribe to divine power alone.

Not however fully satisfied with this conclusion M. Comte has sought to improve upon it, and his last generalization results in the deification of humanity, a conclusion quite as lame and impotent as the former.

History affords us no instance in which the religion of a nation following the course of M. Comte's law of progress has ever merged into science. On the contrary, there would seem to be a much more likely prospect of science merging into religion as might be illustrated by the Bridgewater treaties or the works of Hitchcock or Hugh Miller. Indeed the idea of M^{r} Comte that progress is through the theologic to the positive or scientific is a retrograde idea; for while we cannot have the same objective knowledge of God, which we can have of the universe, yet the universe as a created whole is only intelligible to us, as the manifestation of an idea of the divine mind. Science and theology must always maintain a certain connection, and any attempt to divorce them must always fail as it always has failed, for theology in the phraseology of Bacon is the Queen science and all other sciences are subor-

dinate to and culminate in theology, and that votary of science who prosecutes his researches, without having it indelibly impressed upon his heart, and constantly present to his intellect, that he is endeavoring to trace the foot-prints of his Creator in the universe around him, though he may possibly achieve a certain amount of success, can by no possibility attain the greatest attainable success, for as a general rule, his intellect, like a distorted mirror, will fail to reflect true and undistorted images of the reality of nature.

But the philosophy of this and of other infidel schools, has made the great mistake of considering Christianity only in the light, in which it views the systems of belief of human invention, and while it is willing to admit that christianity is an advance in comparison with Polytheism or Paganism, it fails to perceive that it is pervaded by a spirit which is truly divine and which of course elevates it infinitely above all human mythologies.

Indeed the great and persevering aim of the educated and philosophical mind of Germany in the present day, has been and still is to reduce our heaven descended faith, to the low level of an ancient myth.

With perverse ingenuity, but with vision dimmed by unbelief, Strauss finds in all the miracles of the gospel, in the history of the great founder of our faith, and especially in his resurrection, only mythical representations, which fail to impose on the calm judgment of unimpassioned reason, and which in the last analysis resolve themselves into ordinary natural occurrences; they arrogantly sitting in judgment on the pretensions of a revealed religion, he would seem to content himself with the cheerless and melancholy results of his shallow philosophy.

In contemplating the history of man's progress and of the various agencies which have been conducive thereto, there is none which excites any thing like the interest which is aroused by the consideration of his progress through the influence of religion. If we regard man only in the light of the advance which he has made in industrial progress, our views will of course be restricted to his physical nature, and his temporal wants, and although the progress in this direction has been marvellously great, and has doubtless indirectly reacted on his intellectual and moral progress, yet such a view from the necessity of the case will be of the earth,-earthy. It is only when we regard the progress of the race in science and knowledge that our views become expanded and we look upon man as a higher order of being.

But we get a still higher and nobler view of man's nature, when we regard his progress through the medium of religion. It is now that we see him, with head erect and eye upturned to heaven, contemplating with an intelligent glance, many of the wonders of the universe, and

walking on earth with a secure and firm step, because he is conscious that his hand is firmly grasped by a hand which comes down to him from heaven.

Of all the agencies which have ever been brought to bear upon the selfish brutal part of man's nature, for the purpose of bringing it into subjection to the higher, better, nobler part of his being, we shall find none in the slightest degree comparable with that great agency, the christian religion. Acting with divine power on the otherwise sluggish and animal nature of man, it vivifies and rouses it to actions which elevate it in the scale of being, and approximate it to angelic natures.

Christianity acting on individuals had in the course of years gathered so many within its pale, as naturally to cause its votaries to unite as an organized institution, embracing after a while such numbers as of necessity conferred great power on it; and in this capacity it was constantly occupied in warring against barbarism and all the sins, and errors of society, constantly from its very nature, operating for the amelioration of all the evils, whether social, moral or political, of the world.

By its influence on the minds of men, by enlightening their intellectural and moral natures, it has given rise as a material result to great men—

"Men who have made their lives sublime,
And departing left behind them,
Foot prints on the sands of time;
Foot prints that perhaps another
Sailing over life's solemn main,
A forlorn and ship-wrecked brother
Seeing, shall take heart again."

Men, who by the force of their intellects and energy of their characters, become of themselves great motive powers in the moral and intellectual world; such men as Augustine, Luther and Calvin, who not only urged forward by the mighty and irresistible impulse of their giants intellects the mass of society in their own day, but have exerted a marked and notable influence upon all succeeding ages, an influence which seems destined to be felt to the last syllable of recorded time.

Even in the dark ages of European history, in the days of Charlemagne, we find that monarch enlightened by the gospel, endeavoring to reflect that light upon his wide dominions, endeavoring to dissipate its moral darkness and to ameliorate its barbarism, and to some extent succeeding in the effort.

Alfred the great, also, in England had his mind sufficiently irradiated from the same luminous and refulgent source, to be enabled to diffuse great light upon his age and country, and to enrol his name among the benefactory of his race.

The christian church, now no longer a simple belief, but an institution which had formed itself into a corporate body and already exercised great power in the state, modified in a marked degree the civilization of Europe.

As a moral power thus established in society, christianity was of infinite advantage, it was the germ of resistance to men's physical power and brute force by which the country was overrun. It proclaimed the great truth, that the law of God must become the law of this world or worse come of it. In maintaining too the distinction between spiritual, and temporal power, giving unto Cesar the things which are Cesar's but contending for those which belong unto God, it laid the broadest foundation for civil liberty; and although the church itself often formed incestuous alliances with the state, in direct opposition to this principle it was nevertheless at times compelled to stand up in defence of freedom of conscience.

The church, it is true, afterwards become corrupt, and established a theocracy operating through an assumed vicegerency, a tyranny of the worst form, lording it over God's heritage and enslaving the consciences of men.

But though the church had become corrupt, and in grasping at temporal power, had to that extent lost sight of her true mission on earth, still christianity was gradually infiltrating its mind and humanizing principles into the breast of men, and was silently introducing the great principles of justice and truth into the constitutions of modern governments and into our modern social systems.

Claiming for herself independence of the secular power, claiming the right of free thought and action in her own appropriate spiritual sphere, she was guilty of the gross inconsistency of endeavoring to lord it over the conscience, and as a logical sequence of this assumption of power over individuals she at length advanced to the conclusion that she had the right to exercise authority over kings and governments, and thus raised herself to the height of an overshadowing hierarchy.

But as the church included at this period nearly all the intellectual acquirements and moral energy of the age, it was a comparatively easy task to advance to universal dominion. The position which she assumed seemed not to be presumptuous boldness, but the natural result of superior intelligence. It may perhaps be regarded as doubtful, whether this alliance of christianity with power contributed to or detracted

from its influence for good, in promoting the advancement of society and the progress of civilization. But however this question may be decided, it is we think quite apparent that christianity, even when hampered by its illegitimate alliance with secular power, has so much intrinsic and unalienable virtue, as to be still a very efficient though somewhat crippled agent in promoting the progress and well being of man.

Compare it, or rather contrast it if you please, with any of the other religious systems which have existed on the earth, and its infinite superiority becomes at once apparent. Indeed the obvious and demonstrated effect of every system of religious belief invented by man, has been to retard or keep stationary the condition of its votaries.

The system of *caste* in Egypt and Hindostan has been a great hindrance to the progress of the race, and the stationary, stagnant, immobile condition of society in the east, is perfectly oppressive to the imagination. No more efficient means of securing the perpetual debasement of its victims, could possibly be devised by the greatest enemy to human advancement, than this device of *caste*, which has been incorporated into the religious systems of Brahma and Buhd, and the mind recoils with horror from the appalling contemplation of the untold misery and degradation, which, in the course of the centuries that have rolled over the world since their introduction, have followed in the train of this demoniac engine of spiritual tyranny. The poor miserable victim of *caste* is bound with the iron fetters of prescription, from which there is no possibility of escape. If born in a degraded caste, he must always remain in his degradation, and no sublunary power is energetic enough to ameliorate, in the slightest degree, his abj ect and melancholy condition.

To this sad and degrading picture, Christianity presents a bright and cheering contrast. In all ages of the christian church its offices and preferments have been accessible to all classes. The humblest member of society may aspire to its highest honors, and numerous instances have occured in the history of the church, of the elevation to the highest places of trust and power, of the most obscure of the sons of poverty and lowliness. Indeed, recruits into her ranks were taken from all the ranks of society, and the external condition of her servants was less regarded than in any of the institutions of society. The idea of the equality of man as man is a fundamental christian idea, and in direct and obvious contrast to the immobility of the Hindu system of caste, are the constant activity and unceasing efforts at progress and advancement of the christian system.

Christianity has no fears of the progress of improvement, no dread of change or innovation which does not attack her fundamental principles. Indeed the christian church has always been in motion, always

pushing forward her schemes of benevolence and good will to man, in some field or other of human effort, in some region or other of darkness an superstition. It is in fact a part of her nature to be unceasingly active and stirring in the promotion of all good works. Apathy and indifference are not among her characteristicts, and if the world has made progress it is as plain as demonstration, that christianity has been the chief agent in effecting it.

It may be, and very probably it is, but an Utopian anticipation to look forward to the period of the general elevetion of the sons of toil; and I much fear that however it may run counter to our preconceived views, or to our notions of the most eligible form of society, or the most desirable condition of humanity, that we shall have to remain satisfied with the probable conclusion, that such a degree of intellectual and æthetical culture as is attainable by the individual man, must be confined to a limited number, and that the great mass of society must be contented to partake of that kind of improvement, by a process analogous to that which is designated by the electrician by the term inductive, or by the light reflected on them by the highly priviledged few, who may have leisure and opportunity to devote their minds to these objects.

The body of great and original thinkers in any age must, of necessity, be comparatively few; but it is notwithstanding an increasing body, and while we are forced to admit that the number of the reflecting class of men, of those who by the force of their intellects and their mental culture, give impetus to opinion and direct the current of thought and thus control the course of men's actions, must always be comparatively few; we still think that we can discern evidences of a general forward movement of the whole mass of society, not only in christendom, but also in Pagan countries.

Any view which we are able to take of the past and of the present state of the population of our globe, rather points to the conclusion, that the different gradations of society, which have subsisted in all ages of the world, will continue for a long time at least to exist. Whether it is desirable that there should be any change in this regard, may be doubtful; but if it be desirable, we may well give it up as hopeless, if it should prove itself beyond the power of enlightened christian philanthrophy.

And yet on the part of many very intelligent minds, this hope of a moral progress, this anticipation of the advancement of the race, by the agency of christianity, is met with a shout of derision.

We are pointed with triumphant scorn to the condition of Calmuck and Tartar, Bedowin and Hottentot, Kurd and Papuan, and a host of bar-

barous and heathen tribes, whose benighted minds the light of christianity has thus far failed to reach or illuminate, although it has been above the horison of our earth for eighteen hundred years.

They can well understand, what is meant by physical improvement and intellectual progress. They can see that the telegraph and the steam engine have contributed greatly to the material advancement and prosperity of society, and they can easily conceive that great triumphs of a like kind are likely to be achieved; but when they see that good men from the times of the inspired apostles of primative christianity, to that of the self-denying missionary of our day, have been making almost incessant efforts to dissipate the thick moral and intellectual darkness which enshrouds so large a portion of our earth; to ameliorate the condition of so many of its inhabitants, yet with so little apparent benefit, they do not hesitate to advise us to give up the impossible task, and to abandon the bootless effort in despair.

The world will listen a moment, say they, to your sublime morality, and then like the philosopher of Athens in the days of the apostle Paul, will dub you dreamers and bablers, and turn again to their pursuits of pleasure or profit or toil; for their eyes are immoveably fixed upon earth, and it is in vain that you attempt to give them a heavenward direction. Or if among barbarous tribes you essay to establish your faith, it will not be surprising, should their fierce natures be aroused to wrath by just and faithful denunciation of their vices, if they should inflict upon the bold and conscientious missionary the fate of the martyr, and stone to death the legate of heaven in recompence for the message which he brings to them of peace on earth and good will towards men.

Among those who have undervalued the influence and power of moral and religious agencies in promoting the progress of our race, by giving an undue prominence and a disproportionate dynamical energy to the intellectual element of progress, is Mr. Henry Thomas Buckle, author of a history of civilization, the introductory volume of which has recently been published; a writer of great erudition, and the master of a masculine, bold and vigorous style, which almost carries us captive in spite of his one-sided and exaggerated views.

Unjustifiably assuming the moral element of progress as the stationary element, he concludes that its effects must be limited and stationary. "There is nothing," he says, "to be found in the world, which has undergone so little change as those great dogmas of which moral systems are composed. To do good for others—to sacrifice for their benefit your own wishes—to love your neighbor as yourself—to forgive your enemies—to restrain your passions—to honor your parents—to respect those who are set over you—these and a few others are the sole essentials

of morals; but they have been known for thousands of years, and not one jot or tittle has been added to them, by all the sermons, homilies and text books which moralists and theologians have been able to produce." It is very true that the decalogue is the same now, as it was on the day on which the great law-giver of Israel descended with it from Mount Sinai, and whilst it must necessarily be always the same, from its very nature immutable, like its great author, without paralax or shadow of turning, instead of being stationary in its effects, it is unceasingly active and constantly enlarging the sphere of its activity and influence, and bringing constantly increasing numbers under its power.

The moral element instead of being stationary, is surely much more active, and much more extensive and effective in its action, than the favorite intellectual element to which Mr. Buckle has given such undue prominence.

There is unquestionably a harmony in all the great elements of progress, but the moral element must take the lead and act as the guide and regulator of the others. For the most part it takes the initiative; but whether this be so or not, it sooner or later vindicates its pretensions to precedence.

In China and Japan the intellectual element (aided by the faint reflex of christian morals, embodied in the maxims of Confucius) has had free play for thousands of years, and they may fairly be assumed to have attained the zenith of pagan civilization.

It is yet to be demonstrated, whether christianity has not the power to carry these nations forward to an eminence which they could never otherwise have attained and quite on a level with the civilization of Europe.

Knowledge and its diffusion among men is, in the estimation of this truly bold promulgator of his own dogmatic views, the great lever by which the world has been and must continue to be urged in the forward path of progress. According to this writer, "as the tide of time rolls on in its unceasing flow, it carries out of sight or engulphs beneath its waves, the good and the bad deeds of men;" and the giant crimes and the wide sweeping devastation and ruin of an Alexander or a Napoleon, alike with the earnest thoughts and eloquent words and glowing devotion of a Paul or a Luther, pass away and are forgotten, and are equally without lasting results.

The great dramatic poet has told us that—

"The evil which men do lives after them,
The good is oft interred with their bones."

But according to Mr. Buckle, the evil and the good altogether subside, or are neutralized by subsequent generations, absorbed by the incessant

movements of future ages. "The discoveries of great men," continues this writer, "never leave us; they are immortal, they contain those eternal truths which survive the shock of empires, outlive the struggles of rival creeds, and witness the decay of successive religions. While in morals we have one set of opinions for one age, another set for another—they pass away like a dream, they are as the fabric of a vision which leaves not a rack behind. The discoveries of genius alone remain; it is to them we owe all that we now have; they are for all ages and all times, never young, never old, they bear the seeds of their own life, they flow on in a perennial and undying stream; they are essentially cumulative and giving birth to the additions which they subsequently receive, they thus influence the most distant posterity and after the lapse of centuries, produce more effect than they were able to do even at the moment of their promulgation."

Without wishing to detract in the slightest degree from this eloquent, though rather exaggeratedly eulogistic description of the value of intellectual and scientific discoveries, we are forced to demur to what we conceive to be a distorted, as well as exaggerated view of its relative importance and efficacy compared with moral causes, as an engine of individual, social, national or world progress.

Scientific discovery, it is true, has a very wide influence in its practical results upon the physical well-being of society, and the rudest and most ignorant may participate in its benefits, although unconscious of the source from which these benefits flow.

The application for example of the steam engine to the printing press has enabled us to multiply to an amazing degree the number of the copies of the Scriptures; but in this instance what would be the value of the multiplication, were it not that they contain the revealed will of God to man. Here the moral agency makes use of the scientific discovery to extend its own efficacy and to increase its own power. While the scientific discovery as such can only be made available to the physical well-being of man, his enlightened intellect makes use of it, as a most potent implement in promoting the intellectual and moral progress of the world, and while it brings the moral agency into active contact with a greatly increased number of minds, it is but furnishing that moral agency with increased opportunities of exerting its own gigantic power.

Truth is a great power, whether scientific or moral; but it strikes us with amazement that so masculine an understanding as that of Mr. Buckle should not have perceived the obvious striking and patent fact, that while scientific or intellectual truth must of necessity be limited in the knowledge of it to a comparatively small number of men, to the

educated classes, that moral truth finds its way to the hearts and minds of all but the most benighted and ignorant heathen peoples.

Scientific truth makes its way slowly among the masses even in enlightened countries, hardly at all among the semi-civilized, and not at all among the rude and barbarous tribes of the earth.

What progress has scientific truth made in the six thousand years of man's life on earth, and what progress does it seem likely to make hereafter, unless it is preceded and heralded by the torch of religious truth?

The experiment which has been going on in India, of educating the Hindoo in European science and literature, with a view to his improvement and progress in civilization, has been of no avail in dissipating the moral darkness which enshrouds their hoary superstition. Those engaged in the experiment have become satisfied that Physiology and Geography, Geology and Mathematics are altogether inefficient as a means of enlightening the darkened understanding of the worshiper of Brahma as to his true condition as a spiritual existence, or his true relation to the great maker and ruler of the universe.

For a long time the hands of the christian missionary in India were fettered by governmental interdict, and governmental fears, as to the probable efforts of any attempt to overthrow either Mahomedan or Buhdist impostures, and the efforts of the benevolent were thus forced to take the channel of intellectual and literary culture, as the best available means of effecting a reformation in the morals and manners of that singular population.

The result has been as just stated, a failure. But at length a better day has dawned upon that benighted land, and though still receiving but little encouragement from government, the missionary is abroad in the land, not as a secular, but as a spiritual schoolmaster. The restrictions on christian effort have been relaxed and the prospect of converting the swarming millions of India to the faith of the gospel, is hourly brightening.

Science and literature travel slowly into dark and barbarous regions of the earth, even when aided by commercial intercourse, which is of itself one of the great civilizing agencies of the present or of past ages.

Egypt, Greece and Rome have indeed exercised a potent influence on the civilization of modern Europe, and of our own country; but it is exceedingly questionable, whether they could have accomplished the great results which are before our eyes, if they had not received the still more potent co-operation of christianity. Athens would have doubtless exerted great influence, but both Athens and Jerusalem united were necessary to accomplish the great and never before equalled results of modern civilization.

Japan and China, India, Persia and Turkey, have all had, and for a long succession of centuries, the advantage of a literary, and to some extent of a scientific culture, (for Astronomy at least had made some progress amongst them) and yet they have only been able to attain to what we are wont to characterize as semi-civilization, probably the highes possible attainment of paganism.

Islamism especially had the advantage not only of the fiery proselyting zeal of its votaries, who propagated its tenets by the sword; but in the days of its vigorous existence, in the reign of Haroun al Raschid, and those of the other caliphs of the Abassadeian dynasty, they were the professors and the depositories of all the science and literature of the day. But how does the civilization of Ispahan or Byzantium compare with that of London, Edinburg or Paris?

Since the days of the Apostles of christianity and their immediate successors, no era of our world has been characterized by any thing like the zeal in the propagation of the faith which distinguishes our own times, including the last half century.

It is but fifty years ago, that a few individuals called a meeting at a London tavern, which resulted in the formation of the British and Foreign Bible society, an institution, which with its off shoot and conquerer, the American Bible Society, has become a great power in the moral world. In that short space of time, these kindred societies have translated and printed the sacred scriptures into more than one hundred languages, and dialects of our globe.

We are justified, I think, in regarding these as firmly established institutions, with a good prospect of continuing as long as time shall last, and as they travel down the centuries, scattering on all sides, and with lavish hand, the rich treasures of heavenly wisdom, it is surely no utopian anticipation that they will ultimately place a copy of God's word in the hands of every one of his rational creatures on our globe.

It is not much more than half a century ago, that the Moravian brethren set the protestant world, the example of a missionary enterprise, which in less than ten years, had sent the heralds of the cross to North and South America, to Greenland, to St. Thomas, St. Croix, to Surinam and Berbice, to Lapland, to Tartary, to Guinea, to the Cape of Good Hope, and to the Island of Ceylon. This was the work of a community of artizans and labourers about six hundred in number, who have ever since pursued their work in unobtrusive obscurity, not shrinking from peril or suffering, yet never aspiring to the name of saints or heroes.

It is not more than half a century ago that a flighty ship's surgeon by the name of Thomas advertised for a christian in the city of Calcutta and published in the papers a plan for spreading the knowledge of Jesus

Christ, and his glorious gospel in and around Bengal, and who afterwards became the colleague of Carey, Ward and Marshman, that great triumvirate who in spite of the opposition of the Governor General of India, (who refused to let them land in Bengal, and forced them to take shelter under the Danish flag at Serampore,) initiated the great missionary enterprise, which is now beginning to disclose its great results.

Since that period almost every protestant country on the globe, has been making more or less effort to uphold and extend the missionary cause. England and Scotland, and our own country have engaged in the noble and generous rivalry, and a large portion of the earth's surface has been taken possession of by the vanguard of the church militant.

From Greenland's icy mountains,
From India's coral strand,

From Labrador to Canton, from Constantinople to Burmah and Siam, and the islands of the Pacific, the banner of the cross has been unfurled, and judging from present appearances, we are justified I think in indulging the pleasing hope, the animating anticipation, that many years will not roll over our earth, before the voice of prayer and thanksgiving "following the hours shall encircle the Globe," and earth regenerated, emancipated and disenthralled from the terrible tyranny of sin, shall rejoice in the knowledge of God, and her myriad voices shall unite in sending heavenwards in one loud chorus, a jubilant response to the angelic proclamation, made at Bethlehem eighteen hundred years ago, reechoing its very words, and shouting "glory to God in the highest, *there* is peace on earth and good will towards men;" the dogs of war are in leash, the demon of discord is in chains, and the mild genius of christian charity is waving her peace diffusing caduceus over a subject but happy, over a conquered but smiling, over a prostrate but joyful, earth.

The christian world has much to encourage it, in the prospect which it has in view of subduing the earth, founded upon the success which has already, after years of apparently barren toil, attended its efforts.

The Hindu mother no longer offers up her child as a sacrifice to the river God; the Hindu widow no longer ascends the funeral pile of her dead husband; the savage Feejee has abandoned his revolting cannibalism and started on the path of progress. A site for a christian church has been secured in the city of Canton, and the apparently impregnable ramparts of the hoary superstitions of India are giving way before the steady assaults of the indefatigable missionary. The idols and their temples are beginning to be neglected, and the dawn of a new era seems to be arising on the long benighted regions of the east.

The christian missionary carries with him the arts of civilized life,

gradually introduces agriculture, science, and letters, and makes use of all the legitimate means of promoting the progress and advancement of the race. These means, however, are made subservient to the great end of the moral advancement and the evangelization of the heathen world. They are regarded and justly regarded as mere auxiliaries in the great work; as auxiliaries of great use, and of acknowledged power, but of themselves altogether impotent to civilize the race, notwithstanding the high estimate which is placed on them by philosophical but worldly minded or infidel theorists.

Without aiming at prophecy, let us endeavor to carry our minds now forward to the termination of another century of christian zeal and effort in behalf of the race, and using only the recent rate of progress as a standard of admeasurement, how wonderful will be the results? May we not reasonably indulge the hope, that by that time or sooner, every dark nook and corner of our sin-stricken earth, will have been irradiated by the light of the gospel; that by that time christian fellowship shall be recognised as the true solidarity of the peoples and nations and tongues of earth, and every individual of its motley and almost innumerable population shall be in possession of that volume which has brought life and immortality to light.

Does not even the distant prospect of so glorious a consummation, justify us in rejoicing even in anticipation with the sweet singer of Israel, and in uniting with him in the fervent supplication, "That thy name may be known upon earth, thy saving health among all nations. Let the people praise thee oh God, let all the people praise thee. Let the nations be glad and sing for joy. Then shall the earth yield her increase, and God even our own God shall bless us. God shall bless us, and all the ends of the earth shall fear him."

Having thus glanced in a very cursory manner, at the influence of christianity on the progress of society, I propose now to notice, in an equally succinct way, its influence on the individual, who professing its most holy faith is brought under the government of its celestial principles, who has been initiated into that glorious freedom wherewith the gospel makes us free.

Which is the great end of existence, the improvement of society, or the individual man? The two are assuredly very closely connected, for the improvement of society necessarily depends upon the improvement of the individual members which compose it, and while it might admit of some debate, whether society was formed for the individual or the individual for society, it is very evident that society does not exhaust the entire man, but that the individual has a higher end, and prospects which extend far beyond any human society, all earthly greatness, distinctive elevation or grandeur.

The two elements, the social and the individual, mutually act and react on each other. An elevated and highly instructed society adds greatly to, and gives a decided impulse to individual improvement; while on the other hand this very condition of society is itself absolutely dependent upon individual progress in the scale of improvement.

As regards the individual man, the great laws of morality, the sublime precepts of the gospel, were as powerful and as effectual in their action on the heart and the life, in the first week of their promulgation as they have ever been. The individual man in this regard, attained as high a development as man's nature is capable of attaining, in the person of the great apostle of the gentiles, in the first year of the christian era, as he has probably ever reached, is likely to reach in this life; nay we may safely infer that as regards the proper conduct of life, the grand old patriarch of Uz had as clear a perception of the good and the true, of justice and morality, of his duty to God and his duty to his neighbour, as the most enlightened individual of the present day.

While therefore we are constrained to regard the improvement of society as a necessary result of the influence of christianity, it is plain that it can only act on society, secondly and in consequence of its action on individuals. Its great aim is to elevate *man*, man the individual, every man who cordially embraces it from the fallen and degraded condition in which it finds him up to the highest elevation of which his nature is capable.

We feel assured that we are making no unwarrantable assumption, when we assert that christianity effects a great improvement in the moral condition of man, and yet, although christianity was designed to operate and does operate a marvellous change on man, it does not propose to make him perfect at once. Indeed it admits and teaches that absolute perfection is not attainable in this life. It proposes by a gradual process to enable us to become more and more conformed to the great founder of our faith, to enable us to go on from one degree of perfection to another, until we shall have attained the stature of perfect men in Christ Jesus; but in this it contemplates a growth and progress whose limits shall not be restricted by this earthly state of existence.

Christianity not only enlarges the understanding, but it also purifies the heart. It opens the eyes of men to the clear perception of the duties and responsibilities of rational existence. It effaces from the heart the cause of man's moral degradation, and restores something like its original vividness to that moral image of God in the heart of man which had become dimmed and tarnished by the fall, by that act of disobedience which brought death into our world with all our woe. It enlarges the understanding by giving us wider views of God and the universe; for

although not strictly a scientific book, the christian scriptures do yet reveal to us such clear displays of the power and benevolence of the Creator that without the technical formulas of the sciences, they enrich the mind with a knowledge even of nature, which of itself and without the aid of human science places the student of the Bible, among the enlighted if not among the learnedly educated class of society. The diligent student of the Bible must become intellectually as well as morally enlightened; he must in all essential respects become an educated man, and he occupies a position from which he is enabled to discover and observe much of the harmony which exists between revelation and natural science.

But it is not so much by the enlargement of the understanding, as by the purification of the heart, that faith in Christ elevates man above the level of worldly aims and hopes and aspirations. The scriptures teach a sound philosophy, when they teach us that perfect holiness is essential to perfect happiness, and in accordance with this precept, it brings those who embrace it under a promise to live holy lives, and although it is sadly true that none of us come up to the required standard, it is nevertheless a consolatory reflection that very many are endeavoring to do so and are pressing forward to the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

Christianity encourages every kind of learning, and awakens in the mind a strong desire to know all that can be known of the works of God. Indeed the scriptures tell us that knowledge is better than silver and gold, and Solomon says "Happy is the man that findeth wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding, for the merchandise of it is better than the merchandise of silver and the gain thereof than fine gold. She is more precious than rubies and all the things thou canst desire, are not to be compared unto her. Length of days is in her right hand and in her left hand riches and honor. Her ways are ways of pleasantness and all her paths are peace. She is a tree of life to them that lay hold of her, and happy is every one that retaineth her." The study of the scriptures enlarges the mind by opening up to us true views of the Deity.

There is no question which so occupied the minds of the philosophers of antiquity, so exercised their profoundest thoughts, and so baffled their most industrious research, as the nature and attributes of the great Creator of all things, and of the relation in which our race stands towards him, the infinite and the incomprehensible.

With some minor shades of difference they all regarded him as occupying some far off centre of the universe, having but little regard for the conduct, or the welfare of his rational creatures on earth, leaving

them to the control of certain general laws of nature, misrule and anarchy of their own turbulent feelings, and insurgent passions, to work out as they best could, a partial deliverance from their desolating and ruinous effects.

But when christianity comes, announcing to us as it does in the sublime prologue to the gospel of St. John, that "The word was made flesh and dwelt among us," that the word was God, that he is our Immanuel, God *with* us, not God afar off, making his abode in the hearts of men to dwell there, this—this was the thought which stirred to its depths the mighty heart of humanity. In the eloquent words of another, "This was the power which made

Peor and Baalim,
Forsake their temples dim."

Then mooned Astaroth was eclipsed, and Osiris was seen no more in Memphian grove; then might have been heard the crash of the falling temples of Polytheism, and instead of them came that harmony which holds Heaven and earth in happiest Union.

The capacity of humanity to come into contact with the infinite, is a distinguishing mark of our kind. The indwelling of God with humanity is the noblest illustration of its nature and its high destiny; Christ's head-ship, leader-ship of his people who are united to him as the branch is to the vine, is the golden vinculum which binds our earth to Heaven.

But christianity enlightens the understandings of men by bringing life and immortality to light in the gospel.

This was another question which occupied, but to perplex the mind of antiquity.

The writings of Cicero represent in the most lively colors, the ignorance, the errors and the uncertainty of the ancient philosophers with regard to the immortality of the soul. Even Plato's celebrated argument was grounded on the eternal preexistence of the soul, and failed to afford that firm foundation for belief on so important a point, which could fully satisfy the ingenuous searcher after truth.

But since the light of revelation has fallen upon this obscure point, how have the doubts and fears of men been dissipated, how has the drooping heart been cheered with the soul stirring declaration, "He that believeth in me shall not perish, but shall have everlasting life."

Christianity teaches us moral science perfectly. All the standard writers on morals acknowledge the scriptures to be the fountain from which their systems are drawn. Where else, indeed, can we find such rules for the proper conduct of life, as in the moral law and the precepts of the gospel. "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul. The statutes of the Lord are righteous altogether."

In the scriptures we have a compendious code of morals, applicable to all times and countries, applicable to every condition or station in life. Here we are taught our duty to God, to our neighbour, to our country, to truth; and he will never fall short in its performance who endeavors to quadrate his actions by the standard of the gospel.

How infinitely do all the moral systems of men fall below the sublime teachings of the scriptures? Who can listen to words of him who spake as never man spake, of him the wisest, greatest, purest, noblest being, who ever clad thought in the poor language of humanity, without being satisfied, that the thoughts and the words bear with them intrinsic and irresistible evidence of a divine origin?

Let us listen to them with reverence for they are weighty with truth, they are burdened with the destiny of man. Let us listen to them with eagerness, with more rapt attention than we would listen to the minstrelsy of angels, for they contain our passport to the eternal mansions of the ransomed and the blessed.

If all christians were true and living exponents of the principles of christianity, how potent would be their influence in society, especially in times of trouble and of great popular commotions. With how much more safety would great crises in the history of a people be likely to be passed, if christian principles were practically operative on the minds and the conduct of even professed christians to as great an extent as they should be.

It has been said that it took the world nearly six thousand years to learn the value and importance of the great principle of toleration. One would suppose that so obvious a deduction from the precept "Do unto others as you would have them do to you," would have been made long before the era, and yet if it be true that the merit of promulgating this great truth is due either to the philosopher, John Locke, or to Roger Williams, the founder of Rhode Island, (for both of whom it has been claimed,) it furnishes a striking illustration of the sad truth, that the intellectual visions of man may be so clouded and distorted by prejudice and passion, as to prevent the discovery of truths which stand out in such bold relief that he may read that runs. And if passion and prejudice have been thus potent in blinding the minds of men to the perception of this great truth, I fear they are quite as effectual now in preventing its reduction to practice, notwithstanding it has been brought clearly forth unto the light of day, notwithstanding it has been so often proclaimed from rostrum and pulpit, and it requires on the part of even the least impulsive of us, a frequent recurrence to fundamental principles, to prevent us from forming harsh judgments and entertaining angry emotions towards those who differ from us in opinion.

Permit me to suggest that the times demand of us in this particular a salutary example to each other and to those who are without.

While none but the most enthusiastic optimist would dream of man's attaining a state of perfection in this life, the christian feels an unshaken confidence in the power of christianity to elevate the individual and the race to the highest point of improvement of which they are capable.

If the doctrines and the precepts of our most holy faith, can be brought home to the consciences of men, and be made to influence their lives, those doctrines and precepts must necessarily produce the fruits of good living.

If men's spiritual vision can only be purged with the euphrasy of faith, so that they shall be enabled to discern spiritually the trancendant excellency of the great leader and captain of our salvation, they will then walk with undarkened understandings, and by the light of that light which has come into our world, they will be enabled to walk securely and usefully and happily the dangerous and uncertain path of life.

Picture to yourselves the man, with conscience void of offence towards God and towards man, with a heart devoid of envy and hatred and malice and all uncharitableness, a heart which is occupied by that charity which suffereth long and is kind, which envieth not and is not puffed up, which thinketh no evil, but rejoiceth in the truth, the man who is merciful and pure in heart, and who walketh humbly before his Maker, and you have the portrait of the christian as he should be and as we humbly trust he sometimes is found to be even in "this dim spot which men call earth."

Such a man, if he be clad with the spotless and shining robe of Christ's righteousness, and is careful to ignore utterly his own righteousness, may stand forth before the world as of the highest type of man; he may stand before the universe as the assured heir of a glory, transcending that of the archangel.